

Message Text

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41

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 EUR-12 SY-05 USSS-00

SCCT-01 PER-01 OPR-02 A-01 SIL-01 LAB-04 SS-15 NSC-05

OC-05 CCO-00 /078 W

----- 025952

P R 281422Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO RUFHFTWZQAMCONSUL FRANKFURT PRIORITY 815

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8600

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THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM, SENT ACTION SECSTATE, BEIRUT, CAIRO, PARIS, ROME AND TUNIS FROM TRIPOLI ON 27 MAR, IS REPEATED TO YOU FOR ACTION/INFO.

PLS PASS TO FRDCO

QUOTE.

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BEIRUT FOR CIVIL AIR ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ELAB, LY, FR, BU

SUBJECT: LIBYAN AIR LINES GROUNDS ITS AIR FRANCE CREWS

1. LIBYAN ARAB AIRLINES HAS OPERATED FOR NUMBER YEARS UNDER FLIGHT AND MAINTENANCE OPERATION CONTRACT WITH AIR FRANCE. RELATIONS BETWEEN AIR FRANCE PERSONNEL AND LAA HAVE BEEN QUITE BAD IN RECENT MONTHS. LAA PILOTS AND GROUND PERSONNEL RESENT BETTER SALARIES AND BENEFITS PAID TO AIR FRANCE EMPLOYEES AND THERE HAS BEEN RUNNING DISPUTE
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OVER THIS FOR SOME TIME. LAA PILOTS HAVE ALSO FELT AIR

FRANCE WAS UNNECESSARILY SLOW ABOUT LETTING THEM STEP INTO SHOES OF FRENCH PILOTS.

2. THIS DISPUTE CAME TO A HEAD OVER AN INCIDENT IN BENGHAZI IN MID-MARCH. AIR FRANCE STEWARD HAD CARRIED A SACK CONTAINING SILVER AND JEWELRY FROM PARIS, AND WHEN THE SACK BRIEFLY FAILED TO TURN UP AT ITS DESTINATION HE WAS CLAPPED IN JAIL. (LIBYAN AIR LINES LATER FOUND THE SACK.) IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE JAILED STEWARD, ALL 13 AIR FRANCE CREWS (BUT NOT MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL) IN BENGHAZI DEMONSTRATED AND STRUCK. LIBYAN AUTHORITIES RETALIATED BY SUSPENDING THEM, AND MATTER HAS RESTED THERE.

3. LAA FLEET CURRENTLY CONSISTS OF TWO 727'S AND FIVE CARAVELLES. ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY, THERE IS ONLY ONE QUALIFIED LIBYAN FLIGHT CREW FOR THE 727'S AND NONE FOR THE CARAVELLES. IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT ITS SCHEDULE, LAA WAS THUS OBLIGED TO HIRE TWO TUPOLEV 154'S FROM BALKAN AIRLINES (BULGARIAN) WITH CREWS, AND THESE PLANES ARE NOW FLYING LAA ROUTES TO EUROPE AND CERTAIN POINTS IN NORTH AFRICA. ALL CARAVELLES ARE GROUNDED. IN ADDITION, THREE NEW 727'S LIBYAN AIR LINES HAS BOUGHT FROM BOEING ARE IN PARIS WITH SIX AIR FRANCE CREWS WAITING TO BE FLOWN HERE, BUT UNTIL DISPUTE IS SETTLED NO ONE IS MOVING. CREWS HERE ARE ALSO SCHEDULED TO BE ROTATED AT END OF MARCH.

4. FRENCH EMBASSY INFORMS US THAT ON MARCH 26 TWO NEGOTIATORS FROM AIR FRANCE ARE ARRIVING IN TRIPOLI TO TRY TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE MESS. FRENCH HOPE VERY MUCH THAT TWO SIDES WILL COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING, AS AIR FRANCE CONTRACT IS LUCRATIVE ONE. THEY POINT OUT LIBYANS HAVE NOT DENEOUNCED THE CONTRACT WITH AIR FRANCE AND THAT RENTAL OF PLANES AND CREWS FROM BALKAN AIR LINES IS NOT A SITUATION THAT CAN LAST. EMBASSY ALSO FEELS ITS PILOTS HAVE SHOWED RATHER SHORT FUSES.

5. UNTIL THIS TYPICALLY LIBYAN AFFAIR BLOWS OVER (LIBYAN CONCESSIONS MAY BE NEEDED TO GET THE FRENCH CREWS BACK ON THE JOB) SUGGEST THAT USG EMPLOYEES AVOID FLYING LIBYAN AIR LINES, IF ONLY BECAUSE LAA SCHEDULES MAY BE PERTURBED. THERE IS ALSO QUESTION OF SAFETY. DEPT
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MAY WISH TO BRING PROBLEM TO ATTENTION OF FAA AND SEEK ITS ADVICE AS TO SAFETY OF BALKAN AIR LINES TU-154'S AND CREWS.
STEIN UNQUOTE.
SEELYE

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